MARVEL

4

COSMIC GHOST RIDER

PHILLIPS
VILANOVA
GRUNDETJERN

2023
MO!

3...2...1...DUEL!

FRANK CASTLE HAS BEEN TO HELL AND BACK! HE WAS ONCE THE VIGILANTE KNOWN AS THE PUNISHER UNTIL HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION AS A SUPERNATURALLY EMPOWERED SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE. SINCE THEN, HE HAS ALSO SERVED AS A HERALD OF GALACTUS, THE RIGHT HAND OF THANOS AND A GUARDIAN OF THE GALAXY. AFTER LEAVING HIS MARK ACROSS ALL OF TIME AND SPACE, THE UNIVERSE HAS COME TO KNOW FRANK CASTLE AS...

COSMIC GHOST RIDER

"DUEL IDENTITY"

part four

FRANK CASTLE WAS LIVING OFF THE GRID ON AN ALIEN WORLD, WORKING AT A TAVERN RUN BY MARLOW AND HIS DAUGHTER, AXELLE. BUT THIS FRAGILE PEACE WAS VIOLENTLY INTERRUPTED BY THE BOUNTY HUNTER MONARK STARSTALKER. FRANK WAS FORCED TO TRANSFORM INTO COSMIC GHOST RIDER ONCE MORE BUT WAS UNABLE TO PREVENT MARLOW'S DEATH BEFORE FLEEING WITH AXELLE.

FRANK HAS ALSO BEEN HAVING VISIONS OF A SECOND COSMIC GHOST RIDER CURRENTLY SPREADING CHAOS AND VIOLENCE ACROSS THE GALAXY! AFTER HIS LATEST MASSACRE, THIS SECOND COSMIC GHOST RIDER WAS CONFRONTED BY THE ASGARDIAN VALKYRIE ON A FUELING STATION IN THE DEPTHS OF SPACE. VALKYRIE BATTLED THE EVIL COSMIC GHOST RIDER BEFORE HE ESCAPED. FRANK AND AXELLE ARRIVED SHORTLY THEREAFTER AT THE SAME SPACE STATION, WHERE VALKYRIE SENSED FRANK'S IMMINENT DEATH. BOTH OF THE COSMIC GHOST RIDERS, WHOSE POWERS HAVE BEEN IN FLUX, THEN SIMULTANEOUSLY COLLAPSED.

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ONE MONTH AGO.
SPACE.

ARE YOU CRAZY?!

I DON'T WANNA DIE!

I'D RATHER GET ARRESTED THAN SUCKED INTO THAT *THING!*

DON'T WORRY. I'VE GOT IT--

WHUMP

WHAT WAS *THAT?*

IT SOUNDS LIKE *SOMETHING* JUST HIT THE SIDE OF THE SH--

THOOM

SOMETHING DIDN'T HIT THE SIDE OF YOUR SHIP...

...COSMIC @%#$&% GHOST RIDER DID.

MEANING... ME. IN CASE THAT WASN'T CLEAR.

AND YOU TWO ARE SMUGGLERS.

SO YOU CAN SEE WHERE THIS MIGHT GET A LITTLE AWKWARD FOR YOU...

MIND YOUR OWN *DAMN* BUSINESS, RIDER.

FWSSSH

PEW

PEW

PEW

PEW

THAT'S *NOT* HOW THE WHOLE *SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE* THING WORKS.

YOU DO SOME DUMB $@£%...

...AND *I* DO THE VENGEANCE.

$#@%!

I HATE THIS JOB--

WHUMP

DEET

ARRRRRRRROOOOOOOOO

WARNING. PROXIMITY ALERT.

DIDN'T YOUR PARENTS EVER TEACH YOU *NOT* TO STAGE A ROBBERY AND THEN FLEE STRAIGHT INTO THE FACE OF A *BLACK HOLE?*

BECAUSE I'VE GOT TO SAY...

...THIS PLAN SEEMS *REALLY* @%£#%$ STUPID.

ARRROOC

ARGH!

IT BURNS!

YEAH... GETTING SUCKED INTO A BLACK HOLE DOESN'T EXACTLY *TICKLE--*

"FRANK, CAN YOU HEAR US?

"HIS HEART RATE IS *ACCELERATING...*"

...IF WE CAN'T BRING HIS BODY TEMPERATURE DOWN, I'M WORRIED HE'LL--

FUELING STATION X987. NOW.

NO!

WHAT... HAPPENED? WHERE AM I?

SIT DOWN, FRANK... YOU'RE GOING TO HURT YOURSELF *WORSE.*

NO... I *REMEMBER NOW,* VALKYRIE...

REMEMBER *WHAT?*

SMUGGLERS... THEY DESTROYED A PASSENGER VESSEL WHILE MAKING THEIR ESCAPE AND KILLED HALF THE CIVILIANS ON BOARD...

I... ***INTERVENED...*** BUT THEIR SHIP WAS ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH...SOME KIND OF ***MAGNETIC FIELD*** AND...

...AND NOW THERE'S TWO OF ME...

THAT'S ONE UGLY #@$%€.

AFTER YOU PASSED OUT, WE FIGURED THERE WAS A CHANCE THAT THE *OTHER* YOU MIGHT HAVE DONE THE SAME.

WE FOUND HIM IN AN ABANDONED PASSENGER CABIN. FEVER...ACCELERATED HEARTBEAT...

...JUST LIKE *YOU.*

I FALL INTO SOME BRIGHTLY COLORED HOLE IN THE MIDDLE OF SPACE, AND...*WHAT?*

GET *CLONED?*

OR IT COULD BE A *PIECE* OF YOU...

...NOT A *CLONE* BUT A KIND OF... *INCOMPLETE* ELEMENT OF YOUR IDENTITY.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, AXELLE?

MY FAVORITE BOOK AS A KID WAS ABOUT THIS DOCTOR WHO LEARNED HOW TO REMOVE *PIECES* OF HIMSELF.

HE COULD REMOVE HIS FEAR, HIS ANGER...EVEN HIS LOVE.

BUT ALL THOSE PIECES OF THE DOCTOR TURNED ON HIM BECAUSE THEY WERE *INCOMPLETE* WITHOUT ONE ANOTHER.

EXCEPT I'M *NOT* A MAD SCIENTIST, AND I *DIDN'T* SEPARATE OUT ALL OF MY EMOTIONS.

YOU DIDN'T, BUT THAT *BRIGHTLY COLORED HOLE IN THE MIDDLE OF SPACE* YOU FELL INTO MIGHT HAVE.

AND IF THIS IS JUST A *PIECE* OF FRANK CASTLE...

...THEN IT'S A PRETTY $#%€@% ONE...

INTERESTING LANGUAGE FOR A *MONK.*

MY VOW IS ONE OF *HONESTY.*

I THINK THE MONK'S *RIGHT.*

WITH THE AMOUNT OF BOUNTY HUNTERS AFTER FRANK NUMBER *TWO*...I'D SAY HE DIDN'T EXACTLY GET THE *BEST* ELEMENTS OF THE ORIGINAL FRANK.

THE *ORIGINAL* FRANK HAD A REPUTATION FOR VIOLENCE...BUT NOT WITHOUT *PURPOSE.*

DOES THIS MAKE ME *FRANK NUMBER ONE?*

I *REALLY* DON'T THINK I LIKE THAT...

FRANK NUMBER *ONE* HESITATED... HE HAD THE CHANCE TO PULL THE TRIGGER AND *KILL* A BOUNTY HUNTER...

...BUT HE *COULDN'T* DO IT.

RESTRAINT AND OVERABUNDANCE... PEACE AND VIOLENCE...

...THE TWO *FRANKS* ARE ACTUALLY THE TWO HALVES OF HIS--

HUH?

KRSSSH

IMPOSTOR!

HRN!

WHAM

KRAAAK

FRANK... DON'T--!

I'M GUESSING...

WHAK

...YOU'RE *NOT* THE HALF THAT GOT THE BRAINS, *HUH?*

I NEED YOU **BOTH** TO STOP THIS AND **LISTEN** TO ME...

I CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE **DYING**...

...MOVING CLOSER TO DEATH EVERY MOMENT, BUT I CAN **HELP** YOU.

I'M **DONE** LISTENING TO YOU.

YOU'VE PUNCHED ME, SHOT AT ME AND TRIED TO THROW ME OUT OF AN AIR LOCK.

NONE OF THOSE QUALIFY AS **LISTENING.**

AND DESPITE **ALL** OF THAT...I DO NOT **WANT** TO SEE YOU DEAD, FRANK.

I ONLY WANT TO--

HRM... I FORGOT ONE...

...I HAVEN'T TRIED TO THROW A COSMIC BLAST AT YOU YET!

NO!

KRSSSSH

FWSSSSH

FRANK!

WHY ARE YOU *WAITING*, MONARK?

BY PROCESS OF ELIMINATION, THIS IS THE *ONLY* FUELING STATION WHERE THE COSMIC GHOST RIDER COULD BE HIDING.

SHOULD WE NOT COLLECT THE TARGET AND COMPLETE THE BOUNTY YOU'VE ACCEPTED FROM THE SHI'AR?

PATIENCE, ULYSSES.

I WAS NOT *CREATED* FOR PATIENCE. *DEET!*

IF YOU WOULD TELL ME WHAT YOU ARE WAITING FOR, THEN PERHAPS I COULD--

THAT'S WHAT I'M WAITING FOR...

TWO HEAT SIGNATURES... *DEET*...TWO *IDENTICAL* TRACES OF COSMIC ENERGY...

"...TWO COSMIC GHOST RIDERS."

=KOFF KOFF=

...HRN...

FWSSSSH

I'VE BEEN DOING A LOT OF *SELF-REFLECTION* LATELY, AND I'VE COME TO THE CONCLUSION...

...THAT I'VE GOT A REAL *ATTITUDE* PROBLEM.

SHOULD WE BE AT ALL CONCERNED ABOUT THE *OMINOUS AURA* SURROUNDING US...?

NO...? YOU'RE *GOOD...?*

COOL. THEN I'M SURE IT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABO--

THHOOOM

I'M GETTING THE FEELING THAT THESE AREN'T YOUR *ORDINARY* CLONES.

I'M DETECTING A *VERY* LARGE ENERGY SURGE.

WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT YOU?

FOR STARTERS, YOUR CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM WOULD STRUGGLE TO--

IT WAS A *RHETORICAL* QUESTION, ULYSSES.

BUT I AM *NOT* STICKING AROUND TO FIND OUT WHAT THAT VERY *LARGE ENERGY SURGE* DOES.

LET'S GET THE RIDER AND *LEAVE.*

YES, BUT *WHICH* ONE?

I DON'T CARE...

...AND I DOUBT THE SHI'AR WILL EITHER.

=GASP=

UNGH...

%$#&.

NO, NO, NO...

...NOT AGAIN!

WHUMP

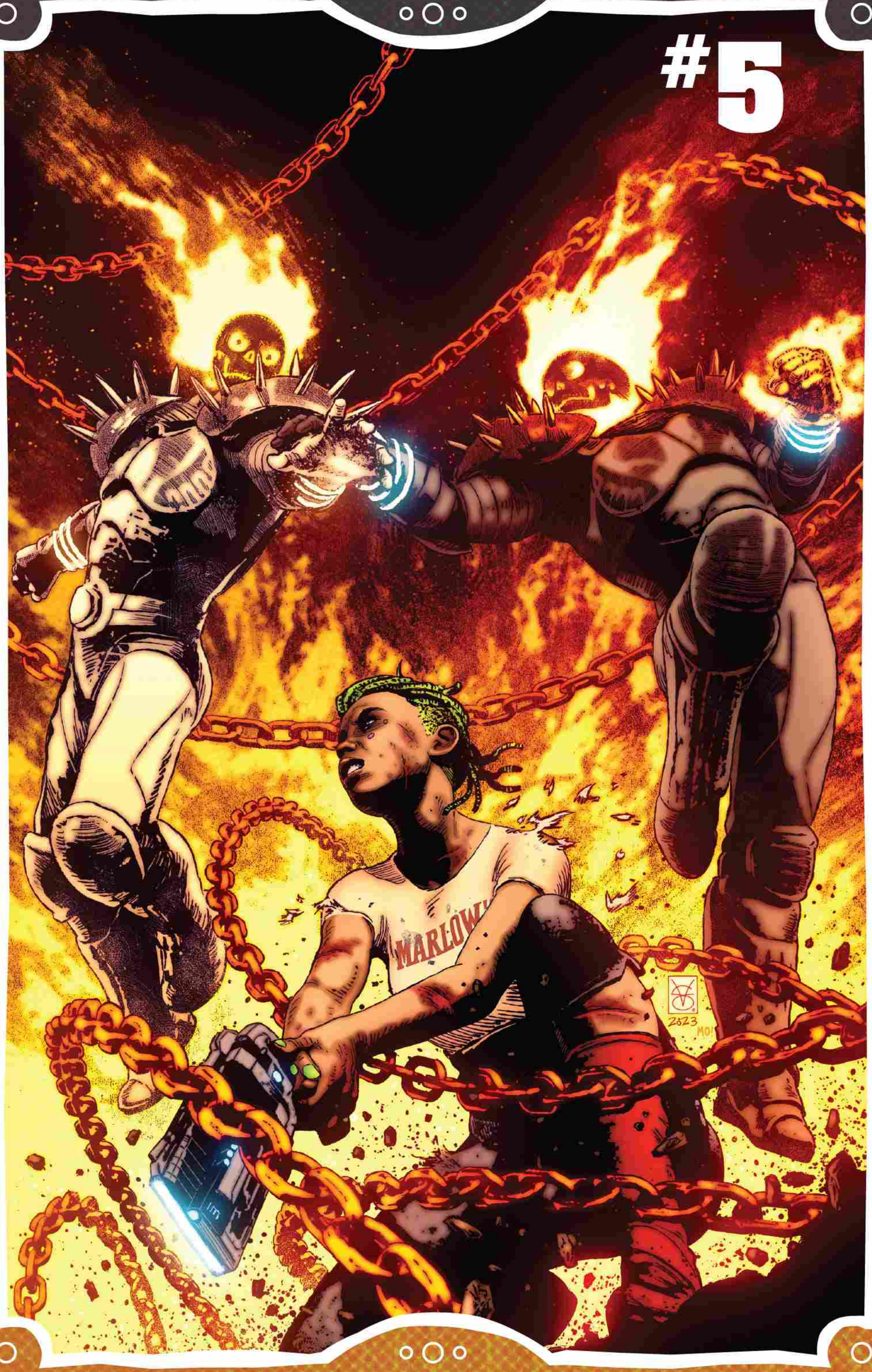
WHERE THE HELL AM I...?

OH.

THERE I AM...

TO BE CONCLUDED!

NEXT:



COSMIC GHOST RIDER HAS BEEN TESTED LIKE NEVER BEFORE AS HE'S BATTLED HIS OWN TWISTED ALTER EGO ACROSS THE GALAXY. BUT NOW, TRAPPED ON AN ISOLATED MOON, HE MUST FACE OFF AGAINST AN ENTIRE HORDE OF COSMIC GHOST RIDERS! WHO WILL BE LEFT ALIVE WHEN THE MOONDUST SETTLES?! AND ONE CHARACTER WILL UNDERGO A SHOCKING TRANSFORMATION AS A NEW FORCE EXPLODES INTO THE MARVEL UNIVERSE!

EMAIL US AT MHEROES@MARVEL.COM AND MARK YOUR MESSAGES "OKAY TO PRINT" FOR A CHANCE TO SEE THEM ANSWERED IN FUTURE ISSUES!

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"